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Washington State Ferry



The foghorn puts out a powerful blast, so strong that the entire boat rattles. Seagulls screech and flap into flight, then circle overhead. The saltwater begins to churn and, once again, a Washington State Ferry moves away from its dock, headed toward Whidbey Island or one of the San Juans.

No exaggeration, this is one of the most exciting moments that a traveler can experience. Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca are vast highways of sapphire water. Snowcapped mountains come into view, down the Olympic Peninsula to the west and from Mount Rainier, marching all the way into British Columbia to the east.

Perhaps you're headed to Whidbey Island to kick around Langley or Coupeville, hike the high-bluff grasslands of Ebey's Landing, or walk the rocky beaches of the state park, then make the safe, but nonetheless courageous walk across the bridge that spans Deception Pass. Or maybe you're off to Orcas Island to stay at a bed and breakfast, or to climb Mount Constitution, or visit galleries. The gentle farm country of Lopez Island may have drawn you. Or you might have abandoned your car, making a secret getaway to a romantic resort on San Juan Island. All that's with the two of you on the boat are backpacks (complete with a change for a formal dinner and a couple bottles of Washington wine) and your bikes.

There's an easygoing cheerfulness, a laid-back way of living well, on Washington's islands that is irresistible. Visitors are spared no courtesy, but you'll never feel fussed over. At any café you'll be right at home for breakfast with a cup of good coffee, a chewy pastry, and a newspaper. Dinner will mean a skillfully prepared meal and you can expect locally grown, fresh produce, quite likely organic, served in handsome, but unpretentious surroundings. The islands are just that kind of place.

No matter what has lured you to make the voyage, great discoveries await and getting there on one of Washington's wonderful ferries is a great beginning to the fun. There's no easier, or for that matter, no more beautiful island getaway.





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Sunset in the San Juans

San Juan Islands

Though there are over 700 islands in the entire San Juan archipelago, and a mere 40 that are inhabited, Washington State Ferries only travel to four of them — Lopez, Shaw, San Juan and Orcas. Don't fret. Those four emerald jewels, harbored in a luxuriant crown of northwest glory, are filled with enough splendor and adventure to satisfy any traveler.

Strewn like glorious, green-coned buttons amidst the Levi blue Puget Sound waters, the San Juan Islands are truly extraordinary. Mingling forests and farmlands, villages and hideaways, each has their unique personality, yet all share a distinct brand of physical beauty. The islands are the ideal place to gather and create lasting memories.

If you plan to drive, you can board the state ferry from Anacortes. Arrive early — especially during summer peak season.

FESTIVE, HISTORIC ANACORTES

Anacortes, the gateway to the San Juans, is actually an island but is connected by two bridges to the mainland and Whidbey Island. Home to colorful Alaska-bound fishing fleets, several bustling marinas and the largest collection of bare-boat charter companies in North America, Anacortes isn't just a colorful entry way; it's a self-contained destination!

There are more than 2,200 acres of wild Community Forestland in the middle of the island with miles of trails and several freshwater lakes. Mount Erie, the highest point in Skagit County, features views of Mount Baker to the Olympics and across the San Juans to Canada.

Downtown hosts a variety of festivals throughout the year, most notably the popular Arts Festival in August. With great shopping and a fine collection of dining options, the downtown greets visitors with nearly 90 life-

sized cutout murals adorning the area's buildings, including many on the national historical register.

Conclude any day on Anacortes' waterfront. There are tours in the open waters or protected estuarine bays, whale watching, underwater diving or kayaking beside the intricate shoreline. Come sunset, cap the day with a view of the ferries traversing Rosario Strait from Washington Park.

THE JOURNEY IS ITS OWN REWARD!

After exploring downtown Anacortes, passengers waiting to board the ferry often glide into relaxation mode and bring a book or amiable companions to the ferry dock to help while away the time. Once you've departed, the ride itself is a true delight, with views of charming and enviable homes, pastoral outlooks, quiet coves and staggeringly beautiful foliage. This isn't just paradise for humans. Seals, sea birds, three resident pods of Orca whales and the highest concentration of nesting bald eagles in the continental United States all flourish here.

Day trips are always an option in the San Juans. Friday Harbor on San Juan Island, Eastsound on Orcas, and Lopez Village on Lopez welcome visitors with great shops and dining options. But, try to take advantage of the bevy of lodging options throughout the islands to fully appreciate the San Juan experience. Shaw is the only island that doesn't have commercial accommodations, although limited camping is available. The others have a wide variety of charming cottages, resorts, vacation rentals or seaside campsites. There are many B & B's sprinkled throughout the lush farmlands, above or beside the salt water or nestled into the native forests. Reservations are strongly recommended for the summer season.

LOPEZ ISLAND

Lopez Island is the first ferry stop, reflecting its strong agricultural history with lovely pastures bordered by the region's spectacular outlooks. Lopez Village is the primary town on the island – leaving lots of acreage for viewing and exploring.

There are several parks and hiking trails here and great freshwater fishing at Hummel Lake. (All but one private lake in these islands requires a fishing license.) Lopez has an outstanding collection of public access parks and beaches, including Agate Beach, Shark Reef Point and Spencer Spit, containing 130 acres with hiking trails and one mile of waterfront. This is also the island that bicyclists love best for its gently rolling roads, friendly residents, and numerous stopping points.

Shaw Island is sparsely populated and has few amenities outside a small store at the land-

ORCAS ISLAND

From the moment the ferry lands at the enchanting town of Orcas Village, Orcas Island simultaneously stuns and seduces visitors with its natural beauty. As a vacation spot, getaway, full-time home or summer residence, Orcas guarantees a warm welcome for all. With first-class marinas, an active, year-round community of 4,400 creative spirits, a multitude of accommodation options and a long list of places to discover, Orcas is on the 'don't miss' list for any visitor to the San Juan Islands. Come summer, get to the ferry line early, and load your camera in hopes that the captain stops the boat to watch a pod of whales – a frequent occurrence.

This is an island that unravels its secrets village by village, cove by cove. Orcas Village — the starting and ending site for island visits — has eateries, shops, a grocery store and the landmark historic Orcas Hotel. West Sound

The 'hub' of Orcas is the village of Eastsound. There are shops, galleries, a wonderful museum featuring the region's history, Saturday Market and Sunday "Music in the Park." Eastsound's Waterfront Park offers great public saltwater access and is the location of numerous summer events. Nearby is the airport, a medical center and Orcas Center, the community venue for the performing and visual arts. If you're looking for the perfect sunset, go to North Beach Road for water access and fabulous outlooks. Drive east on Mount Baker Road and take advantage of one of the island's most spectacular views of — you guessed it — Mount Baker.

MORAN STATE PARK

For a breathtaking panoramic view, Moran State Park contains, literally, the pinnacle of the Orcas experience within its 5,000 plus acres.

*"This is an island
that unravels its secrets
village by village,
cove by cove."*

Michelle Reilly



Lime Kiln lighthouse on San Juan Island

ing and limited camping and picnicking at Indian Cove Park. Even if this is not your final destination, walk out on the deck and take a moment to appreciate and snap a photo of the Shaw Island docking crew. Members of a local order of nuns have been operating the ferry landing here every day for over 15 years.

Saltwater fishing charters are available throughout the islands, as are skippered sailing and powerboat charters. Kayaking is very popular; Lopez, Orcas and San Juan have outfitters that can provide rentals and guided tours. There are strong tides and currents in these waters and observance of safe wildlife viewing guidelines are highly recommended (contact the Whale Museum on San Juan for guideline information). Scuba divers will appreciate the dynamic range of underwater activity.

boasts a marina, County Dock, Yacht Club and a store/café. Deer Harbor, with its marina, is a hub of activity during high season with fairs, fireworks and free concerts.

It isn't just the towns and shoreline that distinguishes Orcas as a prime destination. Travel the Crow Valley Road to appreciate the island's interior between Turtleback Mountain and Eastsound. Those who choose this route will view fertile farmlands, old barns, and the historic Crow Valley School, established in 1888 and now a museum. The Red Apple Barn, also along the route, is a beloved island landmark.

Be sure to respect the island's speed limits — the roads are narrow and are shared by bicyclists, pedestrians, children and animals (the deer and bunnies on Orcas are not shy). There are no stoplights, no streetlights and many 'blind' curves. Besides, why rush and take the risk of missing all the stunning scenery?

Mount Constitution, the highest point in the San Juan Islands, reigns over the park at an altitude of 2,500 feet. There's a stone tower at the peak that provides a 360-degree view of the San Juans, Vancouver Island and the Cascade and Olympic Mountain ranges. On a perfectly clear day, the queens of the northwest, Mount Baker and Mount Rainier, hold court.

Moran State Park was a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) project during the Depression and its lodges and pavilions reflect that era's classic "Park" architecture. Be sure to make reservations for camping during the summer. And, just outside the park is the historic Rosario Resort. Drawing upon its natural setting and colorful history, Rosario has a special charm. Shipping magnate Robert Moran originally built this magnificent complex as an idyllic retreat and it now serves that same function as a premier destination for Orcas visitors —

(Continued on page 12)



Sunny Walter

Orca whale breaching in the Strait of Juan de Fuca

"A Trophy" Fishing Charters

PO Box 2444, Friday Harbor 98250
360-378-2110

www.Globaltelesis.com/trophy

Fishing and whales from fast, comfortable, newer model 29' power boat with latest electronics and high tech gear. Also sailing picnic tours to remote islands.

Cascade Harbor Inn

1800 Rosario Rd, Eastsound 98245
360-376-6350/800-201-2120

www.cascadeharborinn.com

VIEW THE BAY. Comfortable waterfront rooms with private decks and baths. Suites have kitchen and fireplace. Near Moran State Park. No smoking/no pets. 800-201-2120.

Crow Valley Pottery and Gallery

2274 Orcas Road, Eastsound 98245
360-376-4260/800-684-4297 www.crowvalley.com

"One of the Northwest's most enjoyable Art Galleries...." a historic 1866 log cabin featuring glass, jewelry, sculpture, and paintings from over 70 artists. Raku, earthenware, and stoneware from our own studios have been a fixture since 1959. Fabulous and playful Garden Art! Our summer shows are an Island "Must Do."

Kenmore Air

Seattle Terminals on Lake Union &
North Lake Washington, Seattle
425-486-1257/800-543-9595 www.kenmoreair.com

Flying into the Islands is fun and unbelievably scenic! Choose from daily scheduled flights from Seattle. Economical day trips, whale watching, and overnight packages available.

Orcas Island Eclipse Charters & Whale Watch Tours

PO Box 353, Orcas Island 98280
360-376-6566/800-376-6566
www.OrcasIslandWhales.com

Start where the whales are! Enjoy a Naturalist guided tour on the fast, comfortable, stable 56' "Orcas Express." Departing at Orcas Island Ferry Dock.

Orcas Island Pottery

338 Old Pottery Rd, Eastsound 98245
360-376-2813 www.orcasislandpottery.com

Orcas Island Pottery features the work of 18 NW potters who are famous for their use of jewel-tone glazes. This is a 'must see' location with a spectacular water view, 130-year-old log cabin, and beautiful gardens.

Roche Harbor Village

PO Box 4001, Roche Harbor 98250
800-451-8910 www.rocheharbor.com

Spend the day or stay the night in our historic, seaside village located on San Juan Island. Here you'll find accommodations, three waterfront restaurants, world-class marina, Victorian gardens, unique shops, whale watch and kayak tours, pool, tennis, and more. Ask about our "Quiet Season" packages October to mid-May.

Rosario Resort & Spa

1400 Rosario Rd., Eastsound 98245
360-376-2222 www.rosariosort.com

30 acres of beautifully landscaped waterfront on Orcas Island, 127 rooms & 6,000 sq. ft. banquet and meeting space. Direct flights from Seattle and water taxi service from Anacortes in only 45 minutes. 3 Restaurants & Lounge, Avanyu Spa, Marina, Dive Shop, Historic Museum, 3 Pools, Fitness Center, Art Gallery, General Store & Deli, Boutique, Kayaking, Whale Watching, Sailing Charters, Golf, Tennis, and Car Rentals.

San Juan Excursions, Inc.

#2 Spring Street Landing, Friday Harbor 98250
360-378-6636/800-80WHALE (94253)
www.watchwhales.com

Whale Watch/Wildlife Cruises- WHALES GUARANTEED! Private Charters. USCG certified vessels. Sea kayak tours. Naturalist guides. Group rates. Next to ferry/AAA approved. December holiday party charters from Seattle.

San Juan Safaris

PO Box 2749, Friday Harbor 98250
360-378-1323/800-450-6858
www.SanJuanSafaris.com

Whale Watching & Sea Kayaking. Small group specialist, 30 years experience. Naturalist guides, state-of-the-art equipment, operating from Friday Harbor & Roche Harbor, San Juan Island. See Orca and Minke whales, seals, porpoises, sea lion, great blue heron, bald eagles & more. Join Us!

Sea Quest Kayak Expeditions & Zoetic Research

P.O.Box 2424S, Friday Harbor 98250
360-378-5767 / 888-589-4253
www.sea-quest-kayak.com/orca.htm

Join our biologist guides in the premier whale & wildlife waters of the San Juan Islands! Ocean kayak touring is blended with natural history instruction in Washington's ultimate killer whale, porpoise, seal and eagle habitat. State-of-the-art sea kayak equipment provided. Children & custom trips welcome. No experience necessary for 1/2 through 5 day trips.

Western Prince Cruises

PO Box 418/#2 Spring St Landing,
Friday Harbor 98250
360-378-5315/800-757-6722
www.orcawhalewatch.com

Exciting. Fun. Local naturalist guided 4-hour wildlife-whale watch tours. Children welcome. Less than 30 guests. Seasonal and prepaid discounts, AAA. Since 1986.

Water Works Gallery

315 Spring St at Argyle, Friday Harbor 98250
360-378-3060 www.waterworksgallery.com
Representing an eclectic group of regional artists living and working in the Pacific Northwest; paintings, watercolors, works on paper, glass, and stone sculpture.



(Continued from page 10)

many of whom have vacationed here for generations. Past Moran State Park is the delightful village of Olga. Once a port of entry for the island, the town now welcomes visitors with a public pier, an artist's co-op and two restaurants!

A turn onto Pt. Lawrence Road will soon give you the choice of heading out to Doe Bay or turning right to investigate the trail that will lead you to Obstruction Pass Park's public beach and picnic area, a real treat.

EXPLORE THE HISTORY OF SAN JUAN ISLAND

San Juan Island, originally settled in the late 1800s, is the home of Friday Harbor, the county seat and the business center for the islands. Filled with fine restaurants and shops where local artisans display and sell their wares, Friday Harbor is also the home of the Whale Museum, a nationally renowned facility dedicated to education of the fragile ecosystem in which these gentle giants reside.

San Juan Island was the site of an infamous boundary dispute between Great Britain and the United States in 1859. An American farmer shot a British-owned pig, igniting a potential conflict, resulting in joint occupation of this island

until Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany awarded the islands to the United States as part of arbitration. San Juan Island National Historic Park at Friday Harbor commemorates the peaceful resolution of the "Pig War."

San Juan also offers extensive recreational venues – for starters, hike the six-mile beach and trails at American Camp. Then, visit historic, charming Roche Harbor and the grand Hotel De Haro, built in 1886.

THE SAN JUAN EXPERIENCE

These magical islands give gifts to all who come here. They include a slight suspension of time, a considerable window of respite and a constant celebration of the natural world.

Contact Information

San Juan Islands Visitor Info Service

360-468-3663/888-468-3701

www.guidetosanjuans.com

Orcas Island Chamber of Commerce

360-376-2273 / www.orcasisland.org

Business Association of San Juan County

www.travelsanjuans.com



Whale Watch Trips
Sea Kayak Treks
 Roche Harbor / Friday Harbor
(360) 378-1323
(800) 450-6858
www.sanjuansafaris.com

while you're here

Sunny Walters



Bring your bike. Bicycling enthusiasts love touring the islands, for the day or an extended exploration. Be aware that there are no separate bike paths on any of the islands, the roads are narrow and windy and shoulders not an option. It's best to travel single file in small groups and riding children should be carefully monitored. If you're a hearty cyclist, try Orcas and the five-mile trek to Mount Constitution. For the more casual cyclist, Lopez has the flattest terrain and San Juan provides a nice mix of challenge and ease. There are bicycle rentals on all islands but Shaw, and several tour groups are available.

Take the Deer Harbor Road on Orcas, the most scenic of any road, anywhere! Meandering along the water with views of sheer rocky drops and old growth trees, the road winds beside pastoral vistas, farms, and the inimitable outlook of the San Juan Islands.

Kayak. The waters that surround the San Juan Islands offer world class kayak touring. Bring your own boat, or take a guided tour!

Hike! Bring your hiking shoes and enjoy one of Washington's remaining stands of old growth cedar, unparalleled views, and a chance to work up an appetite.

Whale watch. The resident pods of Orcas number about 80 and there are few things more thrilling than sighting these creatures at home and play. May through September is prime time viewing; minke whales also meander through the nearby waterways summer and fall. There are several whale watching tours available and Lime Kiln State Park on San Juan Island is a favorite observation spot. The Whale Museum at Friday Harbor is an outstanding resource center and open year round.

Eat. Fresh produce, arts and crafts are showcased at the Saturday Farmers Market on San Juan, Orcas and Lopez Islands and the Lopez Island or San Juan Vineyards welcome wine tasters. There are a fine collection of restaurants throughout the islands and visitor-friendly crews serve up their own brand of hospitality and delectable meals. The local grocery stores also provide sustenance to those wishing to quickly return to a romantic getaway or a shore-side picnic.

Day Trip. You can plan to visit one or more of the islands during your stay or choose a more international itinerary. Once a day (twice during the summer) the San Juan Island ferries continue to Sidney, British Columbia. Private passenger ferry service to the islands is also available from Bellingham.

Whidbey Island

Whidbey Island, big, beautiful and easy to find from the Seattle/Everett area, is a choice escape for a weekend or weeklong odyssey. Miles of gentle rolling hills seem made for bicyclists, while a trio of towns and many specialty shops please both browsers and serious shoppers. Couples and families schedule regular visits here, gathering at inns, B&B's and other inviting lodgings which, when coupled with a moderate climate, define Whidbey as a perfect year-round getaway.

Access the island via the Mukilteo ferry just north of Seattle, or from Highway 20 at I-5 exit 230, as if heading west toward Anacortes. The latter route includes a short, splendid drive through Deception Pass State Park and over Deception Pass Bridge—providing a magnificent view and outlook you won't want to miss no matter how you approach this wonderful island. A third access point is via ferry from Port Townsend on the Olympic Peninsula to Keystone Landing near Coupeville. Whether your destination is a beachfront cabin on a picturesque bay or a meandering tour of captivating towns, once experienced, Whidbey Island becomes the secret you share and the place that, somehow, now belongs to you.

A perfect introduction to Whidbey begins down south, at the thriving artists' colony of Langley, where pastel painted wooden shops overlook shimmering Saratoga Passage, and the

Cascade Mountains. The town is resplendent with flowers and miniature parks, galleries, outstanding restaurants, and fine antique shops. Gray whales are a frequent springtime sight. To the west, dog lovers gather to walk three miles of sandy beach at Double Bluff Beach Park, watch "ship traffic" on its way to port in Seattle, and search shoreline for ancient woolly mammoth bones.

Heading north is Freeland Beach Park at Holmes Harbor. Here families can enjoy warmer protected waters while children play on the beach. Throughout the Freeland area, especially at South Whidbey State Park, old growth cedar forests line miles of easy hiking trails and surround private campsites.

Garden fanciers will appreciate a celebration of our state flower, gloriously abloom during peak months of March through late June, at Meerkerk Rhododendron Gardens in Greenbank. Open all year, this high season is among many colorful surprises throughout Meerkerk's 50 acres of tranquil trails, forest and meadows. Just up the road, the historic spot to sample wines of the recently recognized "Puget Sound" region, is the Greenbank Farm where a pleasant informal tasting experience comes wrapped in a turn-of-the-century red barn.

Coupeville, situated on placid Penn Cove, about ten minutes north of Greenbank and ten south of Oak Harbor, will soon celebrate a

150th birthday. Quaint and rich in historic appeal, the town invites all to "step back in time." The waterfront district offers plenty of seafood and other dining options as well as galleries, antiques and specialty shops. Victorian homes and fine old barns charmingly reflect Coupeville's 19th century beginnings.

"Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve"—25 square miles of preserved forest, prairie, farmland, bluffs, beaches, parks and hiking trails—surround tiny Coupeville. As Whidbey grows, the "Reserve" remains as it was 100 or more years ago. Here, many buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places are homes and businesses today.

Magical Whidbey isle legitimately boasts of her charming villages, but is also home to a thriving city, Oak Harbor, and Whidbey Island Naval Air Station. Along the northern shores emigrants settled at the turn-of-the-century and visitors are reminded of the rich Dutch heritage by windmills like the one at City Beach Park. City Beach Park also has a campground, many play areas, and an old-fashioned saltwater "swimming hole". Oak Harbor's modern public marina hosts one of the premiere sailing regattas in Puget Sound. Further north, an extensive trail system, saltwater fishing and canoeing are available at Deception Pass State Park.

South Whidbey claims the name "Country



The Ferry House, Ebey's Prairie, Circa 1860. Coupeville, WA, Whidbey Island.



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Deception Pass Bridge

Inn B&B Capital" of the state, a correct moniker south of Oak Harbor, but look to Oak Harbor for practical lodging and amenities of a metropolitan area, minus the big city feel. With a variety of unique and historic "boutique" lodgings and five state parks on the island, Whidbey offers hospitality daily. Year-round camping is available at Deception Pass State Park. Whidbey's weather is equally hospitable. Protected by the towering Olympic Mountains, most of Whidbey is smack in the middle of a "rain shadow" – a geologic escape from the Northwest's famous heavy rains. Add sites with views of Mount Baker, Mount Rainier, the Cascades and the Olympics, then factor in a glimpse of eagles dipping their wings over pristine waters, and you'll understand why visitors flock to this serene paradise.

Contact Information:

don't miss

Fort Casey, a WWI fort and gun emplacement. Part of the "Triangle of Death" fort system built to protect Puget Sound from invasion at the turn-of-the-century. Most of the original fort is now a State Park, where miles of tunnels, turrets and trails to roam and explore delight children of all ages. Visit the historic Admiralty Head Lighthouse for the Interpretive Center. Kite flying is another regular Fort Casey pastime because there is a great, flat marching field and very good wind.

Coupeville Wharf. The complete skeleton of a gray whale is on permanent exhibit inside the restored warehouse building at the head of this historic wharf, which is the oldest standing wharf in the Puget Sound area. Coupeville Wharf extends into Penn Cove, where teeming underwater life belies the serene, glassy surface. The largest commercial mussel farm operation in the United States is here, mostly invisible - under the water - supplying famous Penn Cove Mussels to the world. Lolita, an Orca now in captivity in Florida, was taken from Penn Cove.

Whidbey Island is approximately 50 miles long. These Visitor Centers are located along the route and are listed from north to south.

Oak Harbor-North Whidbey Chamber

360-675-3535

www.oakharborchamber.org

Coupeville-Central Whidbey Island

Chamber 360-678-5434

www.centralwhidbeychamber.com

Langley-South Whidbey Island Chamber

360-221-6765

www.whidbey.com/langley

To order Quick Guide to Whidbey Island

888/747-7777 (Toll free), ask for Operator 10.

recommended stops | WHIDBEY ISLAND

Admiralty Head Lighthouse

Ft Casey State Park, Coupeville 98239

360-679-7391 www.island.wsu.edu

Voted "best historic building" on Whidbey Island, the 1903 lighthouse and giftshop are open during the spring and fall (weekends) and summers (Thursday-Monday). Tours available.

Greenbank Farm

765 Wonn Rd & State Route 525,

Greenbank 98253

360-678-7700 www.greenbankfarm.com

Historic farm with unique winery, featuring the diverse wines of Puget Sound Appellation and gifts. Enjoy coffeehouse, picnics by the pond and walking trails through organic farmlands.

Langley on Whidbey Island

Visitor Center, 208 Anthes, Langley 98260

360-221-6765 www.whidbey.com/langley

Hidden off the main highway this historic artist's village sits on a low bluff overlooking the waters of Saratoga Passage and the Cascade Mountains. The tiny town of flower-filled walkways and "pocket parks" boasts 14 excellent restaurants, galleries, antique shops, high quality stores, performing arts center, marina, and the highest density of B&Bs in the state.